

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A method for providing a computer-based forum for exchanging electronic coupons, the method comprising:

providing a forum database of a plurality of electronic coupons;

transmitting a description of at least one first electronic coupon from the forum to a client computer;

receiving by the forum a signal indicative of a client selection of the at least one first electronic coupon; and

in response to the signal, performing an exchange of electronic coupons, wherein the exchange includes the receipt by the forum from the client computer of data representing a second electronic coupon in trade for the receipt at the client computer of data representing the first electronic coupon.

2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising, verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon comprises:

transmitting data related to the second electronic coupon to an issuing server; and

receiving a response from said issuing server indicating whether the validity of the second electronic coupon.

4. The method of Claim 2, wherein verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon comprises, comparing the second electronic coupon to a valid electronic coupon stored in a coupon database.

5. The method of Claim 1, further comprising, removing user data from the second electronic coupon.

6. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

determining whether to exchange the at least one first electronic coupon for the second electronic coupon; and

if a determination is made to exchange, performing an exchange of electronic coupons, wherein the exchange includes the receipt by the forum of data representing the second electronic coupon in trade for data representing the first electronic coupon.

7. A method for providing a computer-based forum for exchanging electronic coupons, the method comprising:

storing a plurality of electronic coupons on a server;

transmitting a description of at least one first electronic coupon from the server to a client computer;

receiving a signal indicative of a client selection of the at least one first electronic coupon; and

in response to the signal, performing an exchange of electronic coupons, wherein the exchange includes the receipt by the server from the client computer of data representing a second electronic coupon in trade for a transmission from the server of data representing the first electronic coupon.

8. The method of Claim 7 further comprising, verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon comprises:

transmitting data related to the second electronic coupon to an issuing server; and

receiving a response from said issuing server indicating whether the validity of the second electronic coupon.

10. The method of Claim 8, wherein verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon comprises, comparing the second electronic coupon to a valid electronic coupon stored in a coupon database.

11. The method of Claim 7, further comprising, removing user data from the second electronic coupon.

12. The method of Claim 7, further comprising:

determining whether to exchange the at least one first electronic coupon for the second electronic coupon; and

if a determination is made to exchange, performing an exchange of electronic coupons, wherein the exchange includes the receipt by the forum of data representing the second electronic coupon in trade for data representing the first electronic coupon.

13. A method for providing a computer-based forum for exchanging electronic coupons, the method comprising:

providing a database of a plurality of electronic coupons resident on and available for download from at least one first peer computer;

transmitting a description of at least one first electronic coupon from the database to a second peer computer;

receiving by the first peer computer on which the first electronic coupon resides, a signal indicative of a client selection of the at least one first electronic coupon; and

in response to the signal, performing an exchange of electronic coupons, wherein the exchange includes the receipt by the first peer computer from the second peer computer of data representing a second electronic coupon in trade for the receipt at the second peer computer of data representing the first electronic coupon.

14. The method of Claim 13 further comprising, verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon.

15. The method of Claim 14, wherein verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon comprises:

transmitting data related to the second electronic coupon to an issuing server; and

receiving a response from said issuing server indicating whether the validity of the second electronic coupon.

16. The method of Claim 14, wherein verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon comprises, comparing the second electronic coupon to a valid electronic coupon stored in a coupon database.

17. The method of Claim 13, further comprising, removing user data from the second electronic coupon.

18. The method of Claim 13, further comprising:

determining whether to exchange the at least one first electronic coupon for the second electronic coupon; and

if a determination is made to exchange, performing an exchange of electronic coupons, wherein the exchange includes the receipt by the forum of data representing the second electronic coupon in trade for data representing the first electronic coupon.

19. A computer-readable medium having an executable component for providing a computer-based forum for exchanging electronic coupons, wherein the executable component performs a method comprising:

providing a forum database of a plurality of electronic coupons;

transmitting a description of at least one first electronic coupon from the forum to a client computer;

receiving by the forum a signal indicative of a client selection of the at least one first electronic coupon; and

in response to the signal, performing an exchange of electronic coupons, wherein the exchange includes the receipt by the forum from the client computer of data representing a second electronic coupon in trade for the receipt at the client computer of data representing the first electronic coupon.

20. The computer readable medium of Claim 19, where the computer-readable medium having an executable component further comprising the step of, verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon.

21. A computer-readable medium having an executable component for electronic coupon exchange services, wherein the executable component performs a method comprising:

providing an electronic exchange, wherein the system comprises:

storing a plurality of electronic coupons on a server;

transmitting a description of at least one first electronic coupon from the server to a client computer;

receiving a signal indicative of a client selection of the at least one first electronic coupon; and

in response to the signal, performing an exchange of electronic coupons, wherein the exchange includes the receipt by the server from the client computer of data representing a second electronic coupon in trade for a transmission from the server of data representing the first electronic coupon.

22. The computer readable medium of Claim 21, where the computer-readable medium having an executable component further comprising the step of, verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon.

23. A system for providing an electronic exchange, wherein the system comprises:

a coupon server;

an issuing server;

an honoring server, wherein the coupon server, honoring server and the issuing server are electronically connected via a network for communicating data representative of an electronic coupon, and wherein the coupon server comprises a computer-readable medium having an executable component for providing a computer-based forum for exchanging electronic coupons, wherein the executable component comprises:

providing a forum database of a plurality of electronic coupons;

transmitting a description of at least one first electronic coupon from the forum to a client computer;

receiving by the forum a signal indicative of a client selection of the at least one first electronic coupon; and

in response to the signal, performing an exchange of electronic coupons, wherein the exchange includes the receipt by the forum from the client computer of data representing a second electronic coupon in trade for the receipt at the client computer of data representing the first electronic coupon.

24. A method for providing a computer-based forum for exchanging electronic coupons, the method comprising:

providing a forum database of a plurality of electronic coupons;

transmitting a description of at least one first electronic coupon from the forum to a client computer;

receiving by the forum a signal indicative of a client offer to exchange a second electronic coupon for the at least one first electronic coupon;

determining whether to exchange the at least one first electronic coupon for the second electronic coupon; and

if a determination is made to exchange, performing an exchange of electronic coupons, wherein the exchange includes the receipt by the forum of data representing the second electronic coupon in trade for data representing the first electronic coupon.

25. The method of Claim 24 wherein said step of determining whether to exchange comprises verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon.

26. The method of Claim 25 wherein verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon comprises:

transmitting data related to the second electronic coupon to an issuing server; and

receiving a response from said issuing server indicating whether the second electronic coupon is valid.

27. The method of Claim 25, wherein verifying the validity of the second electronic coupon comprises:

transmitting data related to the second electronic coupon to an honoring server; and

receiving a response from said honoring server indicating whether the second electronic coupon is valid.

28. The method of Claim 24, wherein determining whether to exchange comprises comparing the second electronic coupon to a valid electronic coupon stored in a coupon database.